

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, JA, US

SUBJ: LOCKHEED AFFAIR - COMMENTS OF LDP AND DIET MEMBER

SUMMARY. DURING DINNER MEETING WITH JAPAN COUNTRY DIRECTOR FEB 12, LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBER YOHEI KONO MADE A STRONG PLEA FOR A FULL AND IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL INFORMATION ON THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR, INCLUDING THE NAMES OF HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED. KONO ARGUED THAT FAILURE TO DO SO COULD ONLY RESULT IN A GREATER LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE LDP. KONO NOTED THAT RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, MOST JAPANESE BELIEVE THAT THE US SIDE IS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION AND IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DISPEL THIS NOTION EITHER THROUGH A FLAT AUTHORITATIVE DENIAL OR FULL RELEASE. KONO'S STRONG WELL-REASONED PRESENTATION IS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS GENERATION WHICH IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT LDP'S BUSINESS AS USUAL ATTITUDE WILL LEAD TO AN EVENTUAL DEMISE OF CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBERS YOHEI KONO AND KOICHI KATO AND UPPER HOUSE MEMBER KAZUHIZA ARITA ATTENDED DINNER FEB 12 IN HONOR OF JAPAN COUNTRY DIRECTOR
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SHERMAN. FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON THE

PROPRIETY OF AND LIMITATIONS ON DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN US AND JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARIANS, KONO TURNED QUICKLY TO THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR. KONO SAID THAT THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR WAS A MOST UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT. IT HAD PUT THE CONSERVATIVES ON THE DEFENSIVE, JUST AT A TIME WHEN THE COMMUNISTS WERE COMING UNDER ATTACK IN THE DIET. HE NOTED THAT ONLY A FEW MILLION DOLLARS WERE INVOLVED IN THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL WHILE THE JCP MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN ONE OR MORE MURDERS, BUT THAT PUBLIC OPINION TENDED TO FOCUS ON MORE CURRENT ISSUES.

2. KONO STATED FLATLY THAT THE US SHOULD MOVE QUICKLY TO RELEASE ALL THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR, INCLUDING THE NAMES OF HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED. HE AND OTHERS WERE WILLING TO LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY, REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS INVOLVED. FAILURE TO DO SO IMMEDIATELY, HE SAID, COULD ONLY RESULT IN A GREATER LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND, IN THE LONG RUN, IN ITS DEMISE.

3. KONO WAS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS ABOUT NEXT YEAR'S UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS OF "FATEFUL" IMPORTANCE TO THE LDP. THE LDP'S MAJORITY IN THE UPPER HOUSE IS ALREADY RAZOR THIN AND ANY FURTHER LOSSES CAN ONLY BE CORRECTED AT THREE YEAR INTERVALS. ONLY THROUGH A FULL AND IMMEDIATE DISCLOSURE OF THE FACTS IN THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR AND A REGROUPING, COULD THE LDP EXPECT TO RECOVER IN TIME FOR THE 1977 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. KONO BELIEVES THE LDP WOULD PROBABLY SUFFER SOME LOSSES IN THE FORTHCOMING LOWER HOUSE ELECTION, BUT THESE COULD BE RECOUPED IN A SECOND DISSOLUTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE; THE CRUCIAL PROBLEM WAS THE UPPER HOUSE.

4. KONO SAID IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE THIN OR NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS OF MISDEEDS IF NAMES WERE RELEASED.
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HE NOTED THAT SUCH PERSONS WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE CRIMINALLY PUNISHABLE IN JAPAN. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO REMOVE THE SPREADING APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CONSERVATIVE POLITICS.

5. KONO ALLEGED THAT IN THE LONG RUN IMMEDIATE DISCLOSURE WOULD ALSO BE GOOD FOR US-JAPAN RELATIONS. IT WAS, AFTER ALL, THE UNITED STATES SIDE THAT

CONDUCTED THE INVESTIGATIONS AND FROM WHICH THE TRICKLE OF ALLEGATIONS OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF "HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS" HAD BEGUN TO FLOW. RIGHTLY OR WRONG, MOST JAPANESE BELIEVE THAT THE US WAS DELIBERATELY WITHHOLDING INFORMATION AND THE US NOW HAD AN OBLIGATION TO DISPELL THIS BELIEF EITHER THROUGH A FLAT AND AUTHORITATIVE (E.G. SENATOR CHURCH) DENIAL THAT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION EXISTS OR THROUGH A FULL DISCLOSURE. BECAUSE OF INUENDO, ETC THE FORMER COURSE WAS PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE.

6. KONO SAID THAT MIKI AND FUKUDA SUPPORTED FULL DISCLOSURE AS DID SOME 150 OR SO OF 275 LDP LOWER HOUSE DIET MEMBERS. KONO SAID THAT THE LDP HAD MISSED THE CHANCE FOR REFORM IN THE COURSE OF PAST SCANDALS AND STRESSED THAT THE TIME WAS NOW RIPE. HE PREDICTED THE ULTIMATE DEMISE OF CONSERVATIVE POWER IF ACTION WERE NOT TAKEN THIS TIME. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MANY OF HIS SENIORS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY WOULD NOT SUBSCRIBE TO HIS BRAND OF "NEW POLITICS," BUT STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF ACTING PROMPTLY TO PREVENT A CONSERVATIVE DEBACLE AT THE 1977 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. KONO WAS FULLY SUPPORTED BY ARITA (TANAKA FACTION) AND KATO (OHIRA).

7. COMMENT: KONO'S STRONG, WELL-REASONED PLEA FOR PROMPT AND COMPLETE DISCLOSURE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS GENERATION IN POLITICS AND ELSEWHERE. THEY ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED THAT THE LDP'S BUSINESS AS USUAL ATTITUDE WILL SOONER RATHER THAN LATER DESTROY POPULAR TRUST, ENDING

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CONSERVATIVE POWER.
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